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ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION



WORK SESSION DOCUMENT

March 17, 2003

Prepared by

Carol M. Stonefield
Committee Policy Analyst
Research Division

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ASSEMBLY EDUCATION
DATE: 3/26/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT I
SUBMITTED BY: CAROL STONEFIELD

TAB

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Sponsor: Assemblymen Leslie et al.

Assembly Bill 52 proposes to authorize a school district to issue a standard high school diploma to veterans of World War II, who served at any time between September 16, 1940, and December 31, 1946.

Proponents: This project was started in Massachusetts in 1999. Operation Recognition is in place in 30 states. Relatives of deceased veterans could make the request for a diploma in that person's name. The program would also be open to those who have obtained a general educational development (GED) diploma. About 1000 World War II veterans are dying per day, so there is urgency to this act. A public information campaign would make people aware of this program. The number of Nevadans who served in World War II was 22,000.

Representatives of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars supported the bill.

Opponents: This program sends a message to young people that a high school diploma does not have to be earned; that it can be granted *carte blanche*. The Council of Nevada Veterans' Organizations passed a resolution opposing this bill. Veterans only want what they have earned and they have not earned a high school diploma.

Fiscal Impact: None

Proposed Amendments:

1. A representative of the Clark County School District suggested that guidelines be standard throughout the state. It was suggested that the Nevada State Board of Education work with the Nevada Office of Veterans' Services to develop the guidelines.
2. A representative of the WCSD suggested that the provisions become effective upon passage.
3. It was suggested that the honor be extended to veterans of the Korean War and the Vietnam War.
4. A technical amendment is proposed by the Research Division: On page 2, line 7, delete "equivalency" and insert "educational development".

Proposed Friendly Amendments Assembly Bill 52

New language for Section 1, subsection 1(a)

Left high school before graduating to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War; [See note below.]

Addition to Section 1, subsection 2

. . . or its equivalent, or is deceased, upon request of the veteran's family.

New language for Section 1, subsection 3

The State Board and the Office of Veterans' Services shall collaboratively establish guidelines for identifying and issuing standard high school diplomas to persons pursuant in this act.

Revised language for Section 2

This act becomes effective upon passage.

Note:

We have avoided including dates because of the disagreement about the dates for the Vietnam War. Should you want to include dates, that's okay with us.

Submitted by Dotty Merrill, Senior Director
Public Policy, Accountability & Assessment

Washoe County School District

Representing friendly amendments from both WCSD and Clark County School District

07 March 2003



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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 11, 2003
TO: Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams, Chairman
FROM: Carol M. Stonefield, ^{CMS} Senior Research Analyst
Research Division
SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 52: Proposal to Include Veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars

Assembly Bill 52 proposes to authorize a school district to issue a standard high school diploma to veterans of World War II, who served at any time between September 16, 1940, and December 31, 1946.

During the hearing for this bill on March 3, 2003, an amendment was suggested to extend the program to veterans of the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The United States was involved in this conflict between 1950 and 1953. Most veterans of the Vietnam War would have served there between 1965 and 1975.

**QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THE AWARDING
OF DIPLOMAS TO VIETNAM VETERANS**

Subsequent to the hearing, questions arose as to the effect of awarding a standard high school diploma to veterans of the Vietnam War.

Kimberly A. Morgan, Chief Deputy Legal Counsel, Legal Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, was asked the following question:

What is the impact of issuing a standard high school diploma to a person who is still in the workforce? Would that alter that person's eligibility in some way? Could that person use such a diploma to declare himself or herself a high school graduate for the purposes of jobs or education?

Ms. Morgan provided the following response in part:

. . . . [I]ssuing a standard diploma to someone who is still in the job market might cause unintended consequences, because . . . a prospective employer or regulatory agency or college would have no way of distinguishing this one not issued on merit from those issued upon completion of the requirements. The same consequences are valid for the standard diplomas proposed to be issued to WWII vets [I]t is unlikely that they will be using the new diploma to obtain a job, or entrance into college, or get a license that requires high school graduation.

Ms. Morgan further suggested that the title of "honorary" to signify a diploma given without satisfaction of the underlying requirements might be considered.

Mr. Charles W. (Chuck) Fulkerson, Executive Director, Office of Veterans' Services, was contacted for information about the kinds of educational opportunities afforded to servicemen and women who served during the Vietnam War. Mr. Fulkerson said that every post of the United States Armed Forces had an education center. He said that all servicemen and women were offered the chance to study for the general educational development (GED) diploma. At the time, however, demands of the military mission and the duty roster obligations were priorities. Mr. Fulkerson said that, while the courses were made available, the military did not push servicemen and women unless they were going to reenlist after their first term of service was completed. Mr. Fulkerson said that he regards the diploma as a token of appreciation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I trust this information is useful to you. Please let me know if there is anything more that I can do for you on this topic.

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